

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 14, 15, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Albrecht. Claims 16 and 33-50 have been canceled without prejudice. The independent claims 1, 14, 15, and 17 have been amended to recite "the configuration data associated with an intellectual property block for implementation using user logic on the configurable device." Other clarifying amendments have also been made.

This amendment is believed supported in Figure 3A-3B and associated description. In one particular example, "The present invention allows the owner of intellectual property ("IP") in the form of configuration data for a configurable PLD to protect against unauthorized use of the IP. A party generally will be unable to use a PLD incorporating the configuration data unless that party has authority to use the configuration information in a programmable device. Consequently, the proprietary interests of the IP owner are better protected because a party will not be able to use the configuration information without appropriate authorization." (page 9, lines 17-22)

Albrecht does not teach or suggest protecting the use of intellectual property or intellectual property blocks. Albrecht only describes a system where "an electronic signature is generated in a predetermined manner and attached to a transferable unit of write data, to facilitate authenticating the write data before allowing the write data to be written into a protected non-volatile storage. The write data is authenticated using a collection of secured authentication functions. Additionally, the actual writing of the authenticated write data into the protected non-volatile storage is performed by a secured copy utility." (Column 1, Lines 33-41). The Examiner may attempt to argue that the flash memory security circuit is configuration data. However, the flash memory security circuit is not any configuration data or configuration data associated with any intellectual property block.

The independent claims variably recite "disabling user logic provided for implementation of the configuration data." The flash security circuit is not at any point disabled. "Flash security circuit 226 protects FLASH memory 224 from unauthorized write accesses, by keeping FLASH memory 224 write disabled, and generating an SMI to invoke the secured system BIOS write data authentication functions in system management memory 222 to authenticate the write data, whenever it enables FLASH memory 224 for a write access." (column 4, lines 25-30) It is

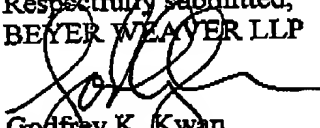
contemplated that certain lines of flash memory could be locked by writing lock bits in various flash memory lines. Consequently, certain lines of memory may be disabled, but no flash security circuitry is disabled.

Furthermore, dependent claims recite a programmable logic device. Albrecht does not teach any programmable logic device. The Examiner in rejecting various depending claims acknowledges that the cited art does not teach the use of an SRAM PLD or an EEPROM PLD, but cites Michael Barr "How Programmable Logic Works" as describing the use of EEPROM and SRAM in programmable memory devices. The Applicants recognize that SRAM PLDs are well known, but use of SRAM PLDs in the context recited by the claims is believed to be novel and nonobvious.

Various dependent claims recite a PLD as the configurable device. Assuming that somehow the Examiner's assertion that a flash memory or BIOS is a configurable device, it would make no sense at all combine Barr and Albrecht and use the PLD configurable device as a flash memory or BIOS. Both a flash memory and BIOS are meant to be inexpensive mechanisms for being persistent storage mechanisms for small amounts of data. Using a PLD as a flash memory or a BIOS would be entirely counterintuitive, and neither Barr nor Albrecht suggest such a use. A PLD includes programmable logic that can significantly slow processing. It would make no sense to use a PLD as a flash memory or BIOS.

In light of the above remarks relating to independent claims and certain dependent claims, the remaining dependent claims are believed allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, please feel free to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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